

Identification of *Philonthus furcifer* Renkonen (Col.: Staphylinidae)

In identifying specimens of *P. furcifer* taken in various localities in Ireland, I came across two problems which may be of interest to others similarly involved; the first concerned leg colour, the second the form of the aedeagus.

Tottenham (1939, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **75**: 201-202), introducing the species to the British List, compared it with *P. micans* (Gravenhorst) to which it is very close and to which it runs down in the key provided by Joy (1932, *A Practical Handbook of British Beetles* H.F. & G. Witherby, London). He wrote that the "legs are blackish, except for the knees and tarsi which are brown, whereas in *micans* the legs are for the most part yellowish". The legs of all my eight specimens, inspected with a hand-lens, are clearly darker than in *micans* (or in the very similar *micantoides* Benick & Lohse) but, under the microscope, they appear more or less uniformly deep red-brown, somewhat lighter only at the knees.

It may be that Tottenham's description was unduly influenced by that of Renkonen (1937, *Ann. Ent. Fenn.* **3**: 73-78) who, in describing the species, gave the leg colour as blackish ("schwärzlich") with knees and tarsi brown. Lohse (1962, in *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas.* **4**. ed. Freude, Harde & Lohse. Goecke & Evers, Krefeld) gives the leg colour as black ("schwarz") with lighter knees and tarsi whilst Coiffait (1974, *Coleoptères staphylinidae de la Région paléarctique occidentale.* Toulouse) describes the tibiae as blackish ("noirâtres"). It may be that there is a real difference in leg colour between Irish specimens and those of other populations possibly because the Irish population has developed in isolation. Unfortunately, a search for the Irish specimens on which Tottenham added the species to the British list among his material in the British Museum (Natural History) was unsuccessful.

Tottenham did not figure the aedeagus though he gives a detailed description of it. Lohse (*op. cit.*), provides a drawing (fig. 71 page 185) which purports, according to the text, to be that of *furcifer* but the drawing does not in any way match Tottenham's description. It was my friend, Mr Allen who gave me the explanation; the correct fig. for *furcifer* is no. 54. This was intimated on an errata slip issued to go with volume 4 of the series (*Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*) but my copy, bought more recently, lacked this. The correction (along with others) appears, albeit obscurely, on page 168 of volume 12.

As far as the British Isles go, *furcifer* appears to be confined to Ireland where it is widely distributed. Tottenham's specimens were taken by Bullock near Killarney. Subsequently the species has been reported from Galway, Limerick, Mayo and Roscommon (Lott & Foster, 1990, *Ir. Nat. J.* **23**: 280-282; Lott & Bilston, 1991, *Bull. Ir. biogeog. Soc.* **14**: 60-73) and no doubt other localities. My specimens, collected in May 1993, are from Clare, Galway, Roscommon and West Meath.

I thank Mr Peter Hammond for his trouble in searching for Tottenham's specimens among material in the British Museum (Natural History).

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